

Subject: For Immediate Release: AZ Forest, Fire and Insurance Representatives Hold AZ Wildfire Forum in Wallow Wildfire Area

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Arizona Wildfire Forum with Forest, Fire and Insurance Representatives: Lessons Learned in 2011 and Community Protection Going Forward

Eagar, AZ, (April 18, 2012) – More than 20 Northern Arizona fire officials joined federal and state forestry officials and insurance representatives for an “Arizona Wildfire Forum” in Eagar, Arizona today. The forum briefed officials from the Wallow Wildfire area on the 2011 wildfires in Arizona and provided education on community protection going forward.

Fire department and district officials from Eagar, Greer, Heber-Overgaard, Payson, Ponderosa, Prescott, Show-Low, Taylor, White Mountain Lake; and officials from Apache, Graham, Greenlee, and Navajo counties; attended the forum.

“The wildfire forum provided all concerned with lessons learned from Arizona’s wildfires in 2011, the largest in the state’s history,” said Arizona State Forester, Scott Hunt. “Fortunately, there were forest treatment techniques, fire suppression advances, and community protection strategies that benefited some communities.”

Co-hosting the forum with State Forester Hunt and the Arizona State Forestry Division were the Arizona Insurance Council and the Arizona Forest Health Council. Farmers Insurance sponsored the wildfire educational event.

“The property and casualty insurance industry in Arizona encourages local communities and citizens to educate themselves on wildfire protection strategies,” said Ron Williams, executive director of the Arizona Insurance Council (AIC). “Homeowners and businesses who use fire-resistant building materials, reduce shrubs and bushes around buildings, and build “defensible spaces” away from properties will increase the chances of surviving a wildfire.”

Topics addressed at the Eagar, Arizona Wildfire Forum included:

- Forest treatments in Arizona that reduced 2011 wildfire fuels and intensity
- Importance and benefits of community wildfire protection plans (CWPP)
- Potential state and federal grants available for CWPP revisions or initiation
- Firewise Community USA Program
- Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Fire Codes
- Arizona Fire Chief’s Association “Ready, Set & Go!” Program

The property and casualty insurers of Arizona, represented by AIC, encourage business and homeowners to take steps to protect their property by thoroughly reviewing their insurance policies. An annual

insurance policy check-up is essential. Home and business owners should contact their agent or insurance company to make certain they have the proper level of coverage.

Key points to go over with your insurance company or agent include:

- Does the policy cover the current costs of rebuilding your house or business? The increases in cost for lumber, steel, concrete and copper have significantly outpaced other products. Those price increases affect what insurers pay to repair and rebuild homes and the costs of satisfying those claims is shared by all insurance consumers.
- Does your policy provide coverage for additional living expenses, such as hotel bills and restaurant meals for the time you are evacuated from your home and/or while your home is being rebuilt?
- Is your insurance company or agent aware of any improvements you have made on your home or business? Updating a kitchen, new carpeting or installing a swimming pool adds to the value of your home. The same applies to business improvements.
- Have you upgraded your home electrical system or plumbing system, or installed anti-theft alarms or fire sprinklers? These improvements could help reduce your insurance premium, depending on your insurance company's business practices.

These and other insurance tips are available at AIC's website at www.azinsurance.org.

*The **Arizona Insurance Council** is a non-profit organization supported by member companies in the property-casualty insurance business.*